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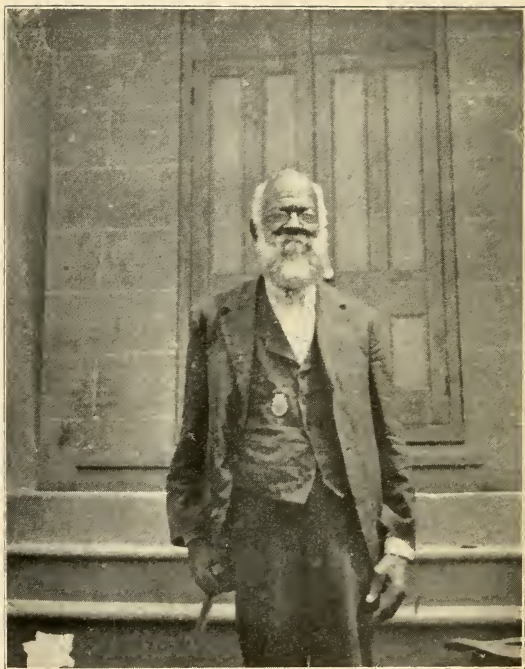
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UNCLE JEFF SHIELDS, LEXINGTON, VA.

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THE  
OLD SOUTH  
A Monograph

BY  
H. M. HAMILL, D.D.



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THE subject-matter of this little book first took form in an address before the students of Emory College, Oxford, Ga., in June, 1904. If apology be needed for putting it in type, the writer finds it in the request of an old woman, now eighty-six years of age, a true daughter of the Old South, whose lightest wish has been the law of his life for more than fifty years.



## THE OLD SOUTH.



Y theme is "The Old South." I have no apology for those who may deem it time-worn or obsolete. I am handicapped in beginning by memories of other writers and speakers who have dealt more worthily than I can hope to do with my subject. The Old South has not been wanting in men to speak and write upon it. Friend and foe alike have exploited it. It has been the burden of poetry not always inspired, and of oratory not always inspiring. Not a few have been its critics who knew it only by hearsay. Indeed, much of current literature upon the Old South is from those who were born after it had passed away. I have no fault to find with any who have thus written or spoken, however worthily or unworthily, if only it was done in kindness. If over the dust of the Old South, while discoursing upon its virtues or its vices, any one has dealt generously with the one and

fairly with the other, I am content, though praise or blame may not always have been wisely bestowed.

I was born in and of the Old South. At sixteen, after a year under General Lee, I received my parole at Appomattox, and went home to look upon the ruin of the Old South. Whatever is good or evil in me I owe chiefly to that Old South. Habit, motive, ideal, ambition, passion and prejudice, love and hatred, were formed in it and by it. My life work as a man has been wrought under what is called the New South, but inspiration and aspiration to it came out of the Old South. The spell it cast upon my boyhood is strong upon me after more than a generation has gone. It is not the spell of enchantment. It has not blinded me to bad or good qualities, and after the lapse of a half century and despite the tenderness for it that grows with the passing years, I think I can see and judge the Old South and give account of it more impartially than one who received it at second-hand.

The Old South, in itself and apart from all other considerations, will always be a profitable study. It is the one unique page of our national

history. Indeed, it comprehends two hundred and fifty years of history with scarce a parallel. I think one will search in vain history, ancient or modern, to find a likeness to the Old South, socially, intellectually, politically, or religiously. I do not wonder that romancer, poet, historian, and philosopher have gathered from it material and inspiration. As a matter of fact, the past decade has brought forth more literature concerning the Old South than the entire generation which preceded it. Its body lies moldering in the ground, but its soul goes marching on. Wherein especially was it unique?

TO begin with, it was in the South rather than the North that the seed of American liberty was first planted. Jamestown, not Plymouth Rock, was the matrix of true Americanism. Poet and orator have made much of the rock-bound coast and savage wild to which the Puritan fathers came, and have had little to say of the Cavaliers who fought their way to conquest over savage beast and man. Winthrop, Standish, and Cotton

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Mather are set forth by provincial and partisan writer and speaker as exclusive national types of pioneer courage, wisdom, and heroism. I have read more than one sneer in alleged national histories against "the gentlemen of Jamestown," of whom it was said that there were "eleven laboring men and thirty-five gentlemen." But the historians who sneer fail to note how these same gentlemen felled more trees and did more hard work than the men of the ax and pick. Long after Jamestown had become a memory, I had seen the descendants of those same derided gentlemen in the Army of Northern Virginia, possessors of inherited wealth and reared to luxury from their cradles, yet toiling in the trenches or tramping on the dusty highway or charging into the mouth of cannon with unfailing cheerfulness.

I do not disparage the stern integrity and high achievement of the Puritan sires. I gladly accord them a high place among the fathers and founders of the republic. But putting Puritan and Cavalier side by side, rating each fairly at his real worth and by what he did to fix permanently the qualities that have made us great, I am confident I could make good my proposi-



AUNT HANNAH.





tion that deeper down at the foundation of our greatness as a people than all other influences are the qualities and spirit that have marked the Cavalier in the Old World or the New.

Was it not in the Old South, for instance, that the first word was spoken that fired the colonial heart and pointed the way to freedom from the tyranny of Britain? Later, when all hearts along the Atlantic seaboard were burning with hope of liberty, was it not one from the Old South who presided over the fateful Congress that finally broke with the mother country? And did not another from the Old South frame the immortal declaration of national independence? And when the hard struggle for liberty was begun, it was from the Old South that a general was called to lead the ragged Continentals to victory. Follow the progress of that war of the Revolution, and it will be seen how in its darkest days the light of hope and courage burned nowhere so bravely as in the Old South.

Seventy-two years and fifteen Presidents succeeded between the last gun of the Revolution and the first gun fired upon Sumter in 1861. Nine out of fifteen Presidents, and fifty of the seventy-

two years, are to be credited to the statesmanship of the Old South. What Washington did with the sword for the young republic, Chief Justice Marshall, of Virginia, made permanently secure by the wisdom of the great jurist. After him came a long line of worthy successors from the Old South, in the persons of judges, vice presidents, cabinet officers, officers of the army and navy, who were called to serve in the high places of the government. The fact is that whatever unique quality of greatness and fame came to the republic for more than a half century after it was begun was largely due to the wisdom of Southern statesmanship. It is hard, I know, to credit such a statement as to the dominating influence in our early national history, now that nearly fifty years have passed since a genuine son of the South has stood by the helm of the ship of State.

As with the statesmanship, so with the military leadership of the Old South. The genius for war has been one of the gifts of the sons of the South from the beginning, not only as fighters with a dash that would have charmed the heart of Ney, but as born commanders, tacticians, and

strategists. In the two great wars of the republic, Great Britain and Mexico were made to feel the skill and courage of Southern general and rifleman. In the Civil War—greatest of modern times, and in some respects greatest of all time—the greater generals who commanded, as well as the Presidents who commissioned them, were born on Southern soil, and carried into their high places the spirit of the Old South. In the extension of the republic from the seaboard to the great central valley, and beyond to the mountains and the Pacific, Southern generalship and statesmanship led the way. The purchase of Louisiana, the annexation of Texas and the Southwest, were conceived and executed chiefly by Southern men.

So for more than fifty formative years of our history the Old South was the dominating power in the nation, as it had been in the foundation of the colonies out of which came the republic, and later in fighting its battles of independence and in framing its policies of government. And I make bold to reaffirm that whatever strength or symmetry the republic had acquired at home, or reputation it had achieved abroad, in

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those earlier crucial years of its history were largely due to the patriotism and ability of Southern statesmanship. Why that scepter of leadership has passed from its keeping, or why the New South is no longer at the front of national leadership, is a question that might well give pause to one who recalls the brave days when the Old South sat at the head of the table and directed the affairs of the nation.

SOCIALLY, the Old South, like "all Gaul," was divided into three parts—the slaveholding planters, the aristocrats of the social system, few relatively in numbers but mighty in wealth and authority; the negro slaves, who by the millions plowed and sowed its fields and reaped its harvests, and who for hundreds of years, both in slavery and freedom, have found contented homes in the South; and lastly the nonslaveholding whites, a distinctly third estate.

The nonslaveholding white of the Old South was essentially *sui generis*. He was really a vital part of a singular semifeudal system, yet, as far

as he could, he maintained his independence of it. He was between two social fires. His lack of culture and breeding, his rude speech and dress, barred him from the big house of the planter, except as a sort of political dependent or henchman. On the other hand, to the negro he was variously known as "poor folks," "poor white trash," and at best as "half-strainers." While there was not a little in common between him and the master of slaves, he had literally no dealings with the negro. Here and there, if one rose to ownership of land or slaves by dint of extraordinary industry or good fortune, his social position was scarcely improved. He became like the shoddy "New Riches" of our own time, in a class to himself.

There are not a few illusions as to these "cracker" whites, which fanciful magazine and dialect writers have helped to spread. A benevolently intended effort has been in progress for a generation on the part of certain sentimentalists, with more money than wisdom, to civilize and Christianize what they are pleased to call the "mountain whites." One would gather from the pleas made before religious conventions, and from the

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facile writers who have made these whites their special care, that they have dwelt continually in religious darkness and destitution, and greatly needed the alien missionary to shed the effulgence of his superior civilization and Christianity upon him. I think I am in a position to say that this forlorn and destitute Southern mountaineer, true to his ancient characteristics, has received these effusive visitors and their benevolences with one eye partly closed and with continued cheerful expectoration at knot holes in the neighboring fence. I am reminded of one of Bishop Hoss's repertoire of anecdotes, all of which have pith and point. Of such a mountaineer as I am depicting, tall, lank, sinewy, frowzy, "a bunch of steel springs and chicken hawk," a tourist satirically inquired: "May I ask, my friend, if you are a member of the human species?" "No, by gum," said the mountaineer; "I'm an East Tennessean."

As a matter of fact there are few people so thoroughly imbued with the religious spirit as these same "cracker" mountain whites, though it is a religion of the Old rather than of the New Testament, in the crude ethics and doctrines



which they commonly hold. Even the Kentucky feudist is after a sort an Old Testament religionist, who has not gone beyond the idea of the "blood avenger" of Mosaic permission. Rude, uncouth, ignorant of books as the poor whites of the Old South were and continue largely to be, I pay them the sincere personal tribute of admiration for the homespun virtues that have marked them as a peculiar people. For two years I lived in their wildest mountain fastnesses, went in and out of their rude cabins, taught their youth, broke bread at their tables, and worshiped God with them in their log meetinghouses. I have earned a right, therefore, by personal contact and knowledge to resent with warmth the imputations under which the cracker white, highland or lowland, is too often made to suffer. Even so distinguished an authority as the *New York Advocate*, in a recent article devoted to this class, permitted the usual distortion of fact in all things pertaining to Southern problems.

Of this rude figure of the Old South, it is enough to say that no hospitality of the plantation mansion ever eclipsed that of his humble home to the man who sought shelter beneath it.

If he never forgave a wrong, he never forgot to repay a kindness. His honesty was such that a man's pocketbook was commonly as safe in the trail of a mountaineer or lowlander as in the vault of a bank. If he had not books or learning, there was something quite as good for his uses which he had the knack of inheriting or acquiring—a home-grown wit and shrewdness of judgment of men and things. Religiously, he took his code and doctrines directly from the Bible, and too often patterned after both good and evil in that book. He saw no incongruity in dispensing homemade whisky and helping on a protracted meeting at the call of his circuit rider. As to his politics, he followed leaders only as he respected them, and was always a thorn in the flesh of the political trickster. If the master of slaves was an aspirant for office, and was possessor of both manhood and money, the cracker white easily became his supporter. Usually holding the balance of power, he taught many a sharp lesson to unworthy men who sought his political favor. Generally the poor white was hostile to slavery; yet singularly enough, true to the patriotism and loyalty strangely formed in him for



SAM DAVIS.



centuries in his isolated condition, when the armies of the North began their invasions of the South, these same whites by the tens and hundreds of thousands put on the gray, and fell into line under the generalship of the owners of plantation and slave. If there was ever such a proverb current among them as "the rich man's war, but the poor man's fight," I did not hear it from the lips of the brave fellows from the log cabins who became the famous fighters of the Confederacy. Over their lowly and sometimes lonely and unkept graves I would lovingly inscribe that exquisitely pathetic epitaph which one may read upon a Confederate monument in South Carolina, dedicated especially to the men who had nothing to fight for or die for but patriotism and honor :

This monument perpetuates the memory of those who, true to the instincts of their birth, faithful to the teaching of their fathers, constant in their love for the State, died in the performance of their duty ; who have glorified a fallen cause by the simple manhood of their lives, the patient endurance of suffering, and the heroism of death ; and who, in the dark hours of imprisonment and the hopelessness of the hospital, in the short, sharp agony of the field, found support and consolation in the belief that at home they would not be forgotten.

**B**ETWEEN the negro and his master there was ever in general a feeling of mutual respect and confidence. If I could gather from the Old South its most beautiful and quaint conceits and incidents, I would find none so full of pathos and interest as the long-continued and ever-deepening affection that often, indeed I might say commonly, bound together the white master and the black slave. Neither poverty nor ruin, nor changed conditions, nor disruption of every order, social and political, was effectual in breaking this bond of loyalty and love; and now, so long after the period of enfranchisement has come, if I wanted concrete evidence of the singular beauty of the social system of the Old South, I should summon as my witnesses those lingering relics of the ante-bellum order—the “old massa” and the old negro. Before the last of that era are gone I should be glad to contribute to some such monument as that proposed by ex-Governor Taylor—a trinity of figures to be carved from a single block of Southern marble, consisting of the courtly old planter, high-bred and gentle in face and manner; the plantation “uncle,” the counterpart in ebony of the master so loyally served and

imitated; and the broad-bosomed black "mammy," with varicolored turban, spotless apron, and beaming face, the friend and helper of every living thing in cabin or mansion.

I would that I had the power to put before you vividly and really the strange and beautiful social life of the Old South. It was Arcadian in its simplicity and well-nigh ideal in its conditions. It was a reproduction of the palmiest days and best features of feudalism, with little of the evil of that system. I know I am confronted by a host of critics and maligners of the so-called "slaveocracy" or "oligarchy" of the Old South. I have often read and heard of its despotism and cruelty from those who did not know or did not intend to be truthful or just. The war that swept slavery and the slaveholder out of existence was inspired and envenomed by such misrepresentation. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a museum of barbarities set forth as the ordinary life of the Old South, a composite of brilliant and brutal falsehoods. I have no defense of feudalistic subjection of the many to the few, nor am I a friend to caste. Yet I have read history in vain and studied human progress to small account if



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I have not, with others, discovered that a true development of society, the stability of government, the conservation of the rights of all classes, depend largely upon a social system in which one class, few in numbers, capable and conscientious, rules the other classes. A pure democracy is the dream of the idealist, and would be unprofitable even in the millennium. The men who own the lands of a country, its moneys, ships, and commerce, who maintain the traditions of the past, and trace their blood to the beginnings of a country's existence—these will inevitably become the leaders and rulers of a country. So the Old South had its aristocracy, whose leaders laughed at the doctrine of equality as proclaimed by sentimentalists at home and abroad.

This Old South aristocracy was of threefold structure—it was an aristocracy of wealth, of blood, and of honor. It was not the wealth of the shoddy aristocracy that here and there, even in the New South, has forced itself into notice and vulgarly flaunts its acquisitions. It came by inheritance of generations chiefly, as with the nobility of England and France. Only in the aristocracy of the Old World could there be found

a counterpart to the luxury, the ease and grace of inherited wealth, which characterized the ruling class of the Old South. There were no gigantic fortunes as now, and wealth was not increased or diminished by our latter-day methods of speculation or prodigal and nauseating display. The ownership of a broad plantation, stately country and city homes, of hundreds of slaves, of accumulations of money and bonds, passed from father to children for successive generations. Whatever cohesiveness the law could afford bound such great estates together, so that prodigality or change could least affect them. Here and there mansions of the old order of Southern aristocracy are standing in picturesque and melancholy ruin, as reminders of the splendor and luxury of the ante-bellum planter. A few months ago I looked upon the partly dismantled columns of a once noble home of the Old South, about which there clustered thickly the memories of a great name and family which for generations had received the homage of the South. As a child I had seen the spacious mansion in the day of its pride, as the Mecca of political leaders who came to counsel with its princely owner, or as the cen-

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ter of a hospitality that never intermitted until the end of wealth came with the desolations of war. The glass of fashion and the mold of form made it famous as a social magnet. In those old days, its beautifully kept lawns, its ample shrubbery, its primeval park of giant oaks, its bewildering garden of flowers, its great orchards, its long rows of whitewashed negro cabins, its stables and flashing equipages and blooded horses and dogs, the army of darkies in its fields, the native melody of their songs rising and falling in the distance, the grinding of cane or ginning of cotton, the soft-shod corps of trained servants about the mansion, the mingling of bright colors of innumerable visitors, the brilliancy of cut glass and silver, the lavishness of everything that could tempt the eye or palate—was like a picture from the scenes of Old-World splendor rather than of a young Western republic. As I looked and brooded over this ruin of a long-famous home, its glory all gone, its light and laughter dim and silent, I paid tribute to an aristocracy of wealth, pleasure-loving indeed, with the inherent weaknesses of transmitted estate, but one which, having freely received, freely

gave of its abundance in a hospitality eclipsing any people whom the world has known.

Porte Crayon, in *Harper's Magazine* long before the war, and Thomas Nelson Page, in these later days, have essayed by pencil and pen to set forth the charm of that wonderful hospitality and home life of the Old South. I saw the last of it. With my parole in my pocket, returning homeward through Virginia with other Confederates, hungry and foot-sore, we turned aside from our army-beaten road to a spacious plantation mansion on the crest of a hill, under whose porch sat a lonely old man, the one living creature we could discern. When we asked for bread, he excused himself for a moment on the plea that family and servants were gone, and that he must do our bidding. In a little while he returned with a huge platter of bread and meat, apologizing for a menu so little varied. When we had eaten as only Confederate soldiers could eat and were filled, we took pieces of money from our little store and tendered him in pay. I can never forget the big tears that welled up in the eyes of the old-time Virginian and the flush on his cheeks, as he said: "No, boys; it is the last morsel of food

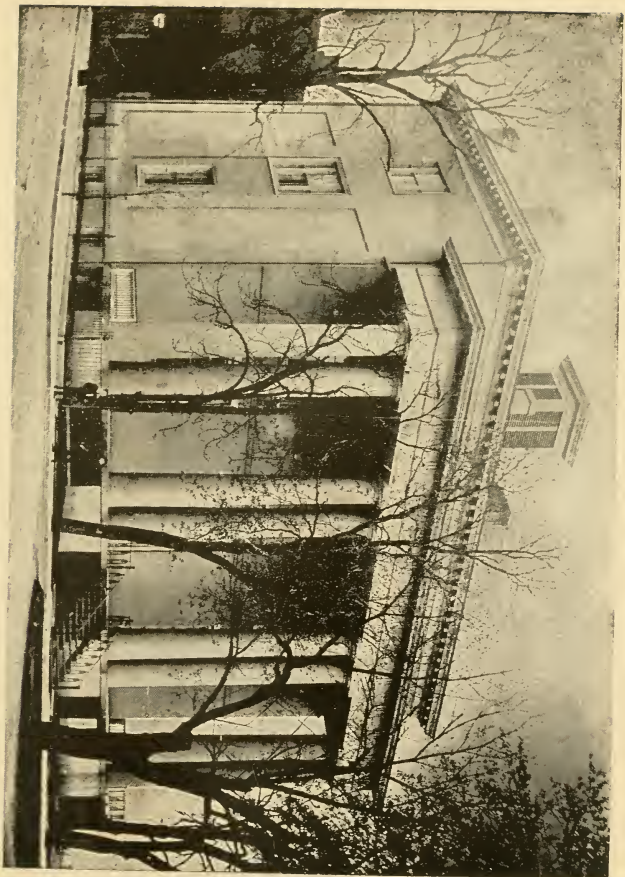
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that the enemy has left me. There is not a living creature or an atom of food remaining, but there is not money enough in both armies to tempt my poverty. I've kept it up as long as I had it to give."

Down under all this wealth of fertile field and dusky laborer and palatial home, there was something in which the old-time Southerner took a pride beyond that which he felt in material wealth. His aristocracy of wealth was as nothing compared to his aristocracy of blood. An old family name that had held its place in the social and political annals of his State for generations was a heritage vastly dearer to him than wealth. Back to the gentle-blooded Cavaliers who came to found this Western world, he delighted to trace his ancestry. There could be no higher honor to him than to link his name with the men who had planted the tree of liberty and made possible a great republic. Whatever honors his forbears had won in field or forum, whatever positions of public importance they had graced, he had at his fingers' ends, and never grew weary of rehearsing. I have nothing but tenderness for this old-time weakness of the Southerner, if weakness

CONFEDERATE WHITE HOUSE.







it can be called. To glory in one's blood for centuries past, if only kept pure, to take pride in the linking of one's name and fame with the history of one's country, to grow gentler and truer and more self-respecting because of the virtues of a long line of ancestors who have lifted a family name to deserved eminence, has to the writer seemed a noble sentiment. I know how fools have made mock of it, and how silly people in the South have sometimes brought it into contempt; but I set forth in pride and gratitude for the Old South as one of its distinguishing characteristics this devotion to the memory and traditions of its ancestry. If here and there the course of transmitted blood lapsed into habit or deed of shame, it happened so rarely that it set the bolder in contrast the aristocracy of gentle blood. "Blood will tell." I remember as a boy watching admiringly and yet a little enviously the graceful and sometimes reckless military evolutions of a hundred or more young bloods, who were making holiday of the art of war. Trim, natty, elegant youngsters they were, in scarlet and gold, the scions of great families. I can remember wondering, as I watched them, if the

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same dash and brilliancy that marked them as gala day soldiery would be maintained by them in the storm of battle which was making ready to break upon us. I had my answer. One day in Virginia the fortunes of war threw my regiment at elbows with theirs. Glitter and gold and scarlet were all bedimmed; but the gay laugh, the Cavalier dash, the courage that never quailed, were with them still as they swung into a desperate charge, singing one of their old cadet songs as lightly as a mocking bird's trill.

If any one should seek for the secret of that singular bravery, that supreme contempt of pain and privation and indifference to death that distinguished our Southern soldiery and won the admiration of its enemies, I think it will be found largely in the ambition of the younger generation to walk worthily after the steps of their fathers. Homogeneous in its citizenship, changing its customs little with passing years, slow to imbibe the spirit of other countries and of other sections of our own country, constant to its own ideals, and always a law unto itself, in no country on the face of the earth was a good name and family dis-

tion more prized and potent than in the Old South.

Linked indissolubly with this aristocracy of wealth and of blood was one which, in my judgment, was stronger than either, and which extended beyond the lines of those who were born to the purple of wealth or the pride of a great name. I do not know better how to denominate it than this—the aristocracy of honor. Proud of their great homes and positions of leadership, and boastful of their high descent, the aristocrats of the Old South, true to the Cavalier traditions, erected an ethical system that defined and regulated personal and public matters and became the inflexible code of every Southern gentleman. Its foundation was laid in a man's "honor," and the honor of a gentleman was the supreme test and standard of every relation, public and private. The extremes of this old Southern ethical code were illustrated, on the one part, by the maxim that "a man's word is his bond," which meant that, the word of honor once passed between men, it must be as inviolable as life itself. Practically, it came to mean, as the present generation little knows or appreciates, that nine-

tenths of the business of the Old South was a mere promise to pay, and that its millions rested from year to year upon the faith and honor that underlay its vast credit system. A gentleman of the Old South might be guilty of not a few peccadillos. He might sin easily and often against himself, but woe to the man who sinned against other men by withholding what was due and had been promised "on honor." Personally I have known men of large business affairs whose whole fortunes depended on the passing of a word, and who on the instant would have surrendered their last dollar to make good that "word of honor." Nor was this exceptional. It was bred in the bone and flesh of every old-time Southern boy that upon this word of personal faith the gentleman must take his stand, and at whatever cost of comfort or convenience or self-denial or sacrifice, even to the death, he must make it good. Such was the code of honor upon its business side.

There was another illustration of the code of a more somber kind, now many years obsolete. It was by the crack of pistol and flash of sword that in the old time not infrequently were determined the fine points of honor. Long ago this

"code duello," with its Hotspur partisans, passed away, and I thank God for the gentler spirit that has come in its stead. With all of its blood and brutality, however, it had one merit which I am frank to allow it. It compelled one to circumspection in what he said and did, or it made him pay instant price for his wrongdoing. It differentiated the man of courage from the bully and the sneak, and it set in bold relief the marks of the gentleman. I am glad to say, too, that during the long and evil reign of the code duello satisfaction in money and by damage suits at law was not as popular as now. The Kentuckian whose bloody face provoked the inquiry, "What ails you?" answered by the code and card when he replied, "I called a gentleman a liar." The kind of gentleman who would salve the wounded honor of his person or family by a check was unknown or unrecognized before the war.

If one wishes to see the old-time planter at his best, he will find him as the pencils of Page, Harris, and Hopkinson Smith have drawn him—courtly, genial, warm-hearted, gracious, proud of his family, boastful of his ancestral line, a lover of gun and dog and horse and mint julep,

an incomparable mixer in the society of well-bred ladies and gentlemen, as unique and distinguished a figure as ever graced the ball or banquet room, the political forum, or the field of honor. His race will soon be extinct, and only the kindly voice and pen of those who knew him and loved him in spite of his weaknesses will truly perpetuate his memory. For two hundred years and more his was the conspicuous and unrivaled figure upon the social and political stage of our history. The good that he did lives after him; may the evil be interred with his bones!

SIDE by side with the aristocrat, waiting deferentially to do his bidding, with a grace and courtliness hardly surpassed by his master, I place the negro servant of the Old South. If one figure was unique, the other is not less so. Either figure in the passing throng would quickly arrest your attention. I am frank to confess to a tender feeling for those faithful black servants of the Old South—the “Uncle Remuses”

and "Aunt Chloes" of picture and poetry. On the great plantations, in their picturesque colors, in constant laughter and good nature, well fed and clothed and generally well-kept and moderately worked, the negro of slavery lived his careless, heart-free life. The specter of hunger and want never disquieted him. His cabin, clothing, food, garden, pocket money, and holidays came without his concern. I think I state the truth when I say that for the millions of slaves of the Old South there were fewer heartaches than ever troubled a race of people. Freedom may be an inestimable boon. I know that poet and orator have so declared. But when I look upon the care-worn faces of the remnant of old-time negroes who have been testing freedom for a generation and have found it full of heartache and worry, I take exception to the much-vaunted doctrine of liberty as the panacea for all human ills. An old darky, with white head and shuffling feet and haunted look in his eyes, stopped the other day at the door of my office, and, after the manner of the old days, his cap in hand, asked "if massa could give the old nigger a dime?" Something in my voice or manner must

have intimated to him that, like him, I belonged to the old order, as he said: "It's all right for some folks, dis thing they calls freedom; but God knows I'd be glad to see the old days once more before I die." Freedom to him, and to others like him, had proven a cheat and a snare. I have no word of apology or defense for slavery. Long ago I thanked God that it was no longer lawful for one human being to hold another in enforced servitude. But a generation or more of free negroes has been our most familiar object-lesson, and the outcome is painful at best. The negro who commands respect in the South to-day, as a rule, is the negro who was born and trained under slavery. The new generation, those who have known nothing but freedom, it is charity to say, are an unsatisfactory body of people generally. Whenever you find a negro whose education comes not from books and college only, but from the example and home teaching and training of his white master and mistress, you will generally find one who speaks the truth, is honest, self-respecting and self-restraining, docile and reverent, and always the friend of the Southern white gentleman and lady.





CONFEDERATE MONUMENT.



Here and there in the homes of the New South these graduates from the school of slavery are to be found in the service of old families and their descendants, and the relationship is one of peculiar confidence and affection; and this old-time darky, wherever you find him in his integrity, pride, and industry, is in bold contrast with the post-bellum negro, despite his educational opportunity. Living as I do in a city famed for its negro schools, I have tried to observe fairly, and indeed with strong predilection in their favor, the processes and results of negro education. Son of an abolitionist of the Henry Clay school, I have sincerely wanted to see the negro succeed educationally and take his place with other men in skill and service. If any city of the South should be the first to confirm the negro's fitness for an education and his increase in value and in character as the subject of it, I thought it but fair to expect it of a city famous for its colored universities. But, with honorable exceptions to the rule, the negro of post-bellum birth and education in this city is usually a thorn in the flesh to one who seeks or uses his service, no matter what that service may be. "We don't have to work

any more," said one recently; "we are getting educated." Yet when one of the darky patriarchs of the Old South died the other day, a leading daily paper, in a tender and beautiful editorial, noted how this colored gentleman of the old school, after a long life of honor and trust, with hundreds of thousands of dollars passing through his hands as confidential messenger, had won the respect of all men by the sheer nobility of his life.

Perhaps the education of hand and foot and eye—the manual training schemes of Booker Washington and other like negro educators—may suffice to avert the degeneracy of the younger negro race. The trouble, however, is that many of these are not enamored of hard work and constant labor. They turn their backs upon ax and saw and plow which the white man offers them along with ample wages, and prefer the negro barroom and the crap table. After forty years have gone, and millions of money have been expended by both Northern and Southern whites in an effort to educate and train him for profitable service, the negro is found practically in two classes—the larger class massed in the

cities and towns, too often despising and shirking work except as compelled to it by sheer necessity; the other class consisting of those who are not ashamed of any kind of work in field, factory, or shop, the significant thing being that those who want work and are doing it are commonly the negroes with little or no education, while those who are shunning work are usually of the so-called educated class.

I am not surprised at the failure of the negro's secular education to make him a good and profitable citizen. It is only another illustration of the folly of trying to sharpen the intellect and leave untrained the heart and conscience. The Old South, by contact, example, and precept, put a conscience and a sense of right and honorable living into its slaves. The New South is largely filling them with books. The negro of the Old South was religious, genuinely so, though by reason of his emotional nature his religion was often a matter of feeling. But such religion as he had he got from white teachers and preachers, and it was real and scriptural. It bound him to tell the truth, to lie not, to be sober and honest, and to do no man wrong.

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How well the negro learned and practiced this old-fashioned religion of slavery, let two facts attest. First, few negroes thus trained in the Old South, so far as the speaker knows, have suffered by rope or fagot for the unnamable crime that so often has marked the negro of the New South. If there be exceptions to this rule, certainly they are exceedingly rare. Secondly, at a time when every white man and even white boys were at the front fighting the battles of the Confederacy, the wives and mothers and children of the soldiers were cared for loyally and devotedly by the negro slaves to an extent unmatched in the history of the world. Such was the honor and conscience of the negro slaves that they watched over the helpless women and children of those who were engaged in a conflict involving their own slavery.

What the negro needs more than books and college curriculum is a conscience. He needs religion of the genuine, transforming kind that will stop his petty thieving, his street corner loafing, and his tendencies toward the barbarism from which in the Old South religion wrested his fathers. I think the time has come when our

Southern white churches should turn again toward the negro and help him as far as possible to a knowledge of pure and undefiled religion, after the example of such ministry as that of Capers and Andrew to the slaves. If I find any fault with ourselves in our relationships with the negro, it is that we too easily conceded that the negro's moral and religious interests should be taken out of our hands since the war by sentimentalists, or by those whose labors among the negroes were inspired by political rather than by genuinely benevolent motives. Once politics is no longer an ally to the negro, and White House favors are not permitted to turn his head, I have some hope that the Southern white and the negro may come together in peace and mutual affection under the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and after an alienation of more than a generation may take up again the old order of religious instruction and training, which the white fathers of the Old South were so zealous to give and which the black servants were so eager to receive. When a young pastor came to me a few weeks ago asking an opinion upon the fact that, in response

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to a request from a score or more of families of negroes on his charge who were without church and other religious facilities, he and his wife had formed their children into a Sunday school and the teachers of his white school were giving them faithful and intelligent instruction every Sabbath, I saw in the incident an intimation of what the New South must do if it would restore the lost negro conscience of the Old South.

I cannot dismiss this passing glance at the social life of the Old South without a sense of abiding regret that it is gone forever. My last personal contact with it was the Christmas just preceding the war. Though the air was thick with rumors of impending strife, no gun as yet had broken the quiet of a land so full of peace and prosperity. I think the merriment of those last holidays of '61 was greater than ever before. I recall it all the more vividly because it was the last old-fashioned Christmas that came to my boyhood, as it was the last that came to the Old South. For weeks preceding it everything on the old plantation was full of stir and preparation. Holly and mistletoe and cedar were being put about the rooms of the big house



to welcome home the boys and girls from school. Secret councils were being held as to the Christmas gifts that were to be given religiously to every one, white and black. The back yard was piled up with loads of oak and hickory to make bright and warm the Christmas nights. The negro seamstresses were busy making new suits and dresses for all the servants. The master of the plantation was figuring up the accounts of the year and making ready for generous drafts upon his ready money. There was an increasing rustle of excitement and happiness that ran from the gray-haired grandfather and mother down to the smallest pickaninny in the remotest negro cabin. The peace and goodness of God seemed to brood over it all. The stately plantation home, with its lofty white columns, its big rooms, its great fireplaces, opened wide to all sons and daughters and grandchildren, uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces. We poured into it; and if ever heaven came close to earth and mingled with it, I think it was that Christmas Eve when the last wanderer and exile had come and the grace was said at the great table by a gray-haired patriarch of the Old South. There was

little sleep for small boys and girls, and long before daylight of Christmas shone in upon us we were scurrying from room to room crying, "Christmas gift!" to which, whenever first spoken by child or dependent, there could be but the one gracious response. Out on the back porches the negroes were waiting in grinning rows to follow our example, and many were the dusky faces that beamed with delight over their never-failing Christmas remembrances. Down in the cabins and up in the big halls of the mansion the lights and fires burned the entire week, and there was nothing that could eat that was not surfeited with the world of eatables made ready. I must beg pardon of the W. C. T. U., which had not then begun its beneficent prohibitory career, if I recall the big flowing bowl of eggnog, renewed daily and served generously to all. I know that this old-time Christmas beverage is growing into disrepute, for which I am sincerely glad, but I confess to a sort of carnal delight of memory when I recall how good it tasted to the average small boy on an early Christmas morning.



JEFFERSON DAVIS.



THE Old South intellectually was a fitting complement to its unique social system. The charge has often been made against it that it produced few if any great writers and left no lasting impress upon the literature of the times. If this were true, it could be answered that the Old South was true to its distinctive mission. It needed to produce great thinkers, and it produced them, as the half-century of its dominating leadership attests. An Elizabethan age, with its coterie of great writers, comes to any nation only at long intervals, and under conditions which are of providential rather than of human ordering. The Southern man, by tradition, inheritance, and choice, and by virtue of a certain philosophic temper which seemed to inhere in his race, was trained to think and to speak clearly, and especially upon grave matters of public import. He was a born politician in the best sense of that much-abused term. Like Hannibal, he was led early in life to the altars of his country and dedicated to its service. He coveted the power and the authority of the rostrum rather than the pen. In the beauty of field and forest, of bright stream and blossoming flower,

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of song and sunshine, or in the historic incidents of the Old South, he had ample inspiration and material for his pen, if he had cared to use it. But it was ever his ambition and delight to stand before his countrymen on some great public day, and set forth the length and breadth of some great argument, patiently studied and thought out in his library and now made luminous and inspiring to the listening multitude. If it were true that the South had no great writers, I could even content myself by recalling how, when one of its brilliant thinkers and orators cast his spell upon the culture of old Boston, the finest editorial writer of that city of writers placed over his leading editorial the next morning the question, "What could be finer?"

While it was true of the Old South that members of its learned professions commonly dallied with the Muses, there was no distinctive profession of letters. The professional poet, historian, and maker of fiction, and publisher and seller of books, were scarcely known. A rural people, a relatively sparse population of readers. the absence of great cities, the concentration of

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thought and learning upon politics and plans of government, the entire lack of commercialism as a motive to literary production, were reasons why the Old South contributed comparatively little *per se* to the stock of permanent literature. There was another hindrance in the fact, which I do not like to recall, that the South, in mistaken largeness of heart or short-sightedness of vision, fell upon two ways that lowered its own self-respect and dwarfed the good it might have attained. It set up a fashion, on the one hand, of reading and patronizing alien books, and accounted these foreign literary products as better than its own. And along with this same mistaken fondness for foreign literary wares, it began to slight its own struggling colleges and schools, and to send its sons and daughters elsewhere for a culture not superior to that procurable at its own doors.

Yet with such admitted weaknesses, let no one suppose for an instant that the ability to write or think or speak worthy of the finest culture was in any wise wanting to the gentleman of the Old South. Enter his library, and you would find what is becoming rare in the New South, but

which was the mark of the gentleman of the Old South—the finest and completest array of costly books upon all subjects, ranging through science, art, literature, theology, biography, history, and politics. Nothing that money could buy or trained scholarship select was omitted. A man's books were his most intimate friends and comrades, and such was the wide range and patient study of the average gentleman of the Old South that wits and savants vied in paying tribute to his varied and scholarly attainments. In singular contrast, the other day one of our literary leaders, discussing the scanty sale of really valuable books, bemoaned the fact that the Southern gentleman's library is fast becoming extinct.

One feature of scholarship that was peculiar to the Old South was the general and thorough devotion to, and mastery of, the classics. I doubt if ever the youth of any country were so well grounded in the literature of Greek and Latin poet and historian, or caught so fully and finely the beauty of the old philosophies and mythologies. It was not an uncommon feat for a boy of fourteen, upon entrance as a freshman to a college of the old order, to read Virgil and



Horace *ore rotundo*, with a grace and finish that would do credit to a post-bellum alumnus. Latin, Greek, and the higher mathematics, with a modicum of the physical sciences, constituted the favored curriculum of the old-time academy and college. How much some of us owe to that ancient academy and that small college can never be rightly estimated. The standard of study was severe and thorough. The discipline was often rigorous and exacting. What, for instance, would our latter-day college boys think of a rule compelling their attendance, if within a mile of the chapel, upon sunrise prayer the year round? Or how would a shudder run through their ranks if I paused to tell them of how in our old Academy two score of us classical students, ranging in age from fifteen to thirty years, having been discovered demolishing the business signs of town merchants in an effort to fulfill the Scriptures which declared that they should seek a sign and none should be given unto them, were soundly thrashed with exceeding roughness and dispatch by the man who for many years has held the superintendency of public schools in the foremost city of the South! Alas

for the disappearance of those good old days and customs, of which the survivors have feeling and pathetic remembrance! For one, I am glad that free public education has come to the children, white and black, of the New South. Whether the hopes of the statesman and philanthropist shall be realized or not, I am also glad of the millions of money the New South has expended in the past generation upon the education of the masses. But the day of the ancient academy and college, as source and inspiration of an incomparable culture, will never be surpassed by latter-day educational systems, however widely extended and beneficent these may be. There was something intensely stimulating in the spirit and method of the old classical school; a sharp yet generous competition and rivalry of scholarship; a thoroughness that reached the foundation of every subject traversed; and above and through it all there was the sure development of a sense of honor and a pride of scholarship that lifted even the dull student into an ambition to succeed. Mixed with all was the example and influence of high-bred Christian gentlemen as professors and teachers, whose lives re-

enforced their teachings and molded us into the image of the gentleman of the Old South. The utilitarian in education was not yet in evidence. The bread-and-butter argument was reserved to a later generation. The cheap and tawdry "business college," recruited from guileless country youth ambitious to become merchant princes and railroad managers by a six months' course in double entry and lightning arithmetic, had not then entered upon its dazzling career. Boys were trained to read extensively, to think clearly, to analyze patiently, to judge critically, to debate accurately and fluently, and in short to master whatever subject one might come upon. Over that old-time educational method might be written the aphorism of Quintilian, that "not what one may remember constitutes knowledge, but what one cannot forget."

WE were not without noble intellectual exemplars in our Old South. The great thoughts of our home-born leaders, from Patrick Henry to Calhoun and Clay, were ever before us.

Our college debates, our commencement orations, were fashioned after the severely classical models these men had left us. From the rostrum, the party platform, the pulpit, whenever a man spoke in those days it was expected and demanded that his speech be chaste, his thought elevated, his purpose ennobling. We were old-fashioned, I admit, in theme and method. We did not aim so much to please and entertain as to convince and inspire. The forum was as sacred as in the palmiest days of Athens and Demosthenes. About it centered our chief ambitions. We had not come upon a degenerate age when a much-exploited college graduate, lyceum lecturer, and "D.D."—as I heard him before a great audience of university young gentlemen and ladies the other day—could descend to a contemptible buffoonery of delineation of the "American Girl" as his theme, and include in his printed repertoire such subjects as "The Tune the Old Cow Died of," which confirmed some of us who heard him in the conviction that Balaam's ass is yet lineally represented in ways of public speech and action.

Of the great writers and orators who left their



ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS.



impress upon us in the last years of the Old South, I can speak from personal contact and experience, and with thankfulness that as a boy I was given to see most of them face to face and to touch, in spirit, the hem of their garments. The spell of the genius of Edgar Allan Poe, though the fitful fever of his life had ended, was upon the literature and literary men of the time. The weird beauty of the lines of this prince of the powers of harmony, contrasting so wonderfully with a strange analytical power that made him at once a foremost prose and poetical writer of his century, had set before us the measure of beauty and the test of genius. Then, in our own day, came Paul Hamilton Hayne, Henry Timrod, and Sidney Lanier. I cannot describe to you the feeling of ownership that we of the Old South felt in this trinity of noble singers; nor can I express the sense of tenderness that comes to me as I recall the pain and poverty that haunted them most of their days until the end came, to two of them at least, in utter destitution. It was my privilege early in life to fall under the spell of the minstrelsy of these three men. As long as the red hills of Georgia stand, and its over-

hanging pines are stirred by the south wind's sighing, let it recall to the honorable and grateful remembrance of Georgians the gentle yet proud-spirited poet who, having lost all but honor and genius in his native sea-girt city, came to his rude cabin home at Copse Hill as the weary pilgrim of whom he so tenderly sings:

With broken staff and tattered shoon,  
I wander slow from dawn to noon—  
From arid noon till, dew-impearled,  
Pale twilight steals across the world.  
Yet sometimes through dim evening calms  
I catch the gleam of distant palms;  
And hear, far off, a mystic sea,  
Divine as waves on Galilee.  
Perchance through paths unknown, forlorn,  
I still may reach an Orient morn;  
To rest where Easter breezes stir  
Around the sacred sepulcher.

I know what a fashion it is to worship at the shrines of the "Lake poets," and how Wordsworth and Burns and Shelley and like singers of the Old World, with Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell of the New, are set on high as the greater masters of poesy. But if genius is a thing of quality rather than quantity, I go back to the



dark days and memories of battle and take my stand lovingly beside the new-made grave of Timrod, the poet laureate of the Confederacy, and call to mind what I believe to be a poem that the greatest of English and American poets would be glad to claim as their own. Remember, as you read it, how in his dire want the poet wrote of the little book of which it is a part: "I would consign every line of it to oblivion for one hundred dollars in hand."

Spring, with that nameless pathos in the air  
Which dwells with all things fair;  
Spring, with her golden suns and silver rains,  
Is with us once again.

. . . . .  
Still there's a sense of blossoms yet unborn  
In the sweet airs of morn;  
One almost looks to see the very street  
Grow purple at his feet.  
At times a fragrant breeze comes floating by,  
And brings—you know not why—  
A feeling as when eager crowds await  
Before a palace gate  
Some wondrous pageant; and you scarce would start,  
If from a beech's heart  
A blue-eyed Dryad, stepping forth, should say:  
"Behold me! I am May!"

Sidney Lanier was of the Old South, though fame came to him from the New. It was fitting that the latest of the progeny of genius of the Old South should become the foremost of those who were to gild it with a fame imperishable. Born in Georgia, less than a score of years before the tragedy of the Old South began, writing his earliest poems as a boy in Confederate camp and Federal prison, his music tinged with the somberness of the time, Lanier's genius was like the last of the Southern flowers that burst into bloom just before the coming of chilling frost and wintry wind. It was like the bright-red flower of war which he describes: "The early spring of 1861 brought to bloom, besides innumerable violets and jessamines, a strange, enormous, and terrible flower, the blood-red flower of war, which grows amid the thunders." Why it is that the price of genius must always be paid in blood, I do not know; but not all the transmitted genius and culture and spirit of the Old South, which crystallized in this last and greatest of her literary children, could absolve Lanier from the pangs which Southern genius seems peculiarly called upon to suffer. As the holiest and brav-

est lives spring out of darkness and storm and sorrow, it may be that only such baptism of tears and blood which we as a people have received could fit our sons and daughters for their high vocation.

Lanier was easily the greatest of the poets of the South. Perhaps his final place is yet to be fixed among the greater singers of America, but it is comforting to know that the clear light of dispassionate judgment of the receding years dispels the first-formed prejudices, and lifts the singer into nobler and yet nobler place.

Broken with pain and poverty, yearning unutterably for the peace and quiet of an opportunity to pour out his divine genius in great and holy song, could anything be more utterly pitiful than this passionate cry for help, which lay among his papers after his death?

O Lord, if thou wert needy as I,  
If thou shouldst come to my door as I to thine;  
If thou hungered so much as I  
For that which belongs to the spirit,  
For that which is fine and good,  
Ah, friend, for that which is fine and good,  
I would give it to thee if I had power.

"A thousand songs are singing in my heart," he

declares, "that will certainly kill me if I do not utter them soon."

Lanier's genius was many-sided, and there is not a line he wrote of poetry or prose that one would care to blot. He had the exquisite sense of melody of Poe, but he had what Poe did not in the spirit of the maxim of his art which he often expressed in the words: "The beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty." He had, too, the tenderness and pathos and lyrical beauty of Timrod and Haynes, yet the characteristic of his poems is that they call one to worship God. They usher us with bowed head and chastened spirit into the holy of holies. "A holy tune was in my soul when I fell asleep," he writes; "it was going when I awoke."

Just as in the ancient mythology, while one of divine descent might hold converse for a time with sons and daughters of men unmarked or unrecognized, yet by glance of eye or grace of motion would inevitably betray himself as of the progeny of the gods, so if ever for a moment I were in doubt as to the genius of Lanier my doubt would vanish as in the darkness, with bowed head and pitying heart of love, I sang

to myself his "Ballad of the Trees and the Master:"

Into the woods my Master went,  
Clean forspent, forspent.

Into the woods my Master came,  
Forspent with love and shame.  
But the olives they were not blind to him,  
The little gray leaves were kind to him,  
The thorn tree had a mind to him,  
When into the woods he came.

Out of the woods my Master went,  
And he was well content.

Out of the woods my Master came,  
Content with death and shame.  
When death and shame would woo him last,  
From under the trees they drew him—last;  
'Twas on a tree they slew him—last,  
When out of the woods he came.

ONE of the aphorisms of my youth was, "Poeta nascitur, orator fit." That the poet is "born," and ever bears upon himself the marks of his divine enduement, I do not doubt; but that the orator "becomes" or happens so by chance or labor, I must strongly deny. A certain fluency

of speech, a certain gloss of oratory, may possibly be achieved by dint of elocutionary drill and practice. If one is minded, like orators of an elegant postprandial type, to stand before a mirror and practice the tricks of gesture and speech, he may hope to attain applause from those whose blood is kept well cooled by the ices of the banquet room. I have described it fittingly as "postprandial" oratory, for the reason that it is most appreciated when the stomach and not the brain is chiefly in operation.

But if any one as a boy had ever sat under the matchless spell of the real masters of the forum, those who were as fully "born" unto it as was Lanier to poetry or Blind Tom to music; if within a half score of years he had been permitted to hear in their prime Jefferson Davis, Robert Toombs, Ben Hill, Alexander Stephens, Judge Lamar, and William L. Yancey, the after-dinner elegancies of oratory of the class I have named would be tame and dispiriting. I would not underrate the men of later fame, but I am sure that it is not time and distance only that lend enchantment to the names of that galaxy of famous orators who closed the succession

of platform princes of the Old South. I would not detract an iota from whatever claim the New South may have to oratory, but I stand firmly upon the proposition, self-evident to survivors of the Old South, that the golden age of Southern oratory ended a generation ago. Compared with Yancey, the incarnate genius of oratory, any oration of that superb master of assemblies by the side of the best post-bellum oratory (always excepting Henry W. Grady) is as Hyperion to a satyr.

On a day that no one who was present will ever forget, while the war clouds were gathering and old political issues were giving place to the one dominant and terrible question of the hour, in a little Southern city, within the compass of twelve hours I heard the greatest of the orators of the last tragic era of the Old South. Whig and Democrat were words to conjure with, and the old-fashioned custom of joint debate was yet in honor. The crux of an intense and hard-fought campaign was at hand, and only the platform giants of the contending parties were in demand for the occasion. From fifty to a hundred miles around, towns, without railroad com-

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munication as now, poured their delegations in upon the crucial day of the campaign. For two days and nights in advance, processions with fife and drum and bands, cannon and cavalry, had held rival parade. The fires of a great barbecue, with its long lines of parallel trenches in which, under the unbroken vigilance of expert negro cooks, whole beeves and sheep and hogs and innumerable turkeys were roasting, sent forth a savor that would have tempted the dainty palate of an Epicurus. Floats were formed, and fair young women and rosy-cheeked children expressed in symbol the doctrines of their sires, and sang to us until our hearts were all aglow. To the small boy there were meat and drink, sights and sounds illimitable, and a tenseness of excitement that thrilled him with a thousand thrills, for in the presence and sound of the great men of his country the boy's heart must expand and his ambition take fire.

Not in a hundred years could I forget the speeches and speakers of that eventful day. Whole passages linger in memory now, fifty years after they were spoken. I recall the jubilant ring of Ben Hill as, lifting an old placard on



which was inscribed, "Buck, Breck, and Kansas," he said: "You got your Buck, you got your Breck, but where's your Kansas?" Or Brownlow, with the heavy thump of his fist on the table, declaring, "I would rather vote for the old clothes of Henry Clay, stuffed with straw, than for any man living." Or Toombs, with massive head and lordly pose, denouncing in blistering speech the unholy alliance of certain men of the Old South with the enemies of its most vital institution. Or Stephens, small and weazened, sallow and unkempt, with cigar stump in hand, his thin, metallic voice penetrating with strange power to the remotest part of the great open-air assemblage. All day, back and forth, the battle of the giants raged. Toward nightfall the Democrats were in dire distress over the seeming victory of the opposition. Yancey lay sick at home, sixty miles away, and the wires were kept hot with pleadings to bring him at any cost, if possible, to the scene. At nine o'clock that night I saw a strange tribute to the power of that orator, who, I doubt not, will stand unrivaled in the future as in the past. Pale and emaciated, taken from his sick room and hur-

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ried by special train, upborne upon the shoulders of men whose idol he had been for twenty years, he was carried to the platform at the close of a day's great victory by the opposing party. With singularly musical voice and an indefinable magnetism which fell upon all of us, he began a speech of two hours' length. Within an hour, such was the magic of the man, he had turned the tide of defeat, rallied his party, and filled them with hope and courage. Within another hour he was receiving the tremendous applause of even his political enemies, and had undone all the mighty work of the giants of the opposition and sent them home with a chill at heart.

With such political leaders as these men, and with the finest intellect and character of the Old South devoted for generations to the study and exposition of the purest party politics, I am not surprised at the higher level of parties and platforms of the Old South. Politics was not a "graft," as the present-day political ringster defines it. The political and personal conscience were one and the same, and a man's politics was no small part of his religion. I am not saying that all political leaders were incorrupt-

ible statesmen, or that an unselfish patriotism was the invariable mark of its party politics. The demagogue was not unknown, and the fine Italian hand of the mercenary was sometimes in evidence. But of one fact I am abundantly assured—the spoilsman and the grafter held no recognized and official standing in that old-time democracy. Men of ability and character might aspire to political place and honor. They might even go beyond the personal desire and become open candidates for party favor. But the service of the paid political manager, the conciliation of the party “boss,” the subsidizing of the party “heelers,” the utilization of the party press in flaming, self-laudatory columns and even pages of paid advertising matter, *ad nauseam* and *ad infinitum*, as in recent Southern political contests—all these latter-day importations and inventions of “peanut” politics would have merited and received the unmeasured contempt of the politicians of the Old South. There were certain old-fashioned political maxims that constituted the code of every man who would become a candidate for office, as, for instance, “The office should seek the man, not the man the office.”

I cannot find heart to censure the politician of the New South for his smile at the verdancy and guilelessness of such a maxim, but that which provokes a smile was in my own remembered years the working motto of the old-time Southern leaders of high rank. Another maxim was that "the patriot may impoverish but not enrich himself by office-holding." As a commentary upon this maxim, it affords me infinite satisfaction, in a retrospect of the long line of men who led the great political campaigns of the Old South and held its positions of highest trust, that most of them died poor, that none of them within my knowledge were charged with converting public office into private gain, and that the highest ambition of the old-time politician was to serve his country by some great deed of unselfish patriotism, to live like a gentleman, and then to die with uncorrupted heart and hands, and with money enough to insure a decent burial. If he left a few debts here and there, they were gratefully cherished as souvenirs by his host of friends.

Earlier in these pages I raised the question as to why the South, once so potent in national council and leadership, was now become the

mere servant of the national Democratic party, so much so that the recognized Sir Oracle of Republicanism and mouthpiece of his excellency the President is led to remind us, while a guest on Southern soil, of our pristine place and power, and to admonish us, in the frankness of an open and worthy foeman, to quit playing the role of lackey in national politics, and to put forth as of yore our own home-grown statesmen for national positions of highest honor and service, and to do all in our might again to restore the lost political prestige of the South. Come from whomsoever it may, Republican or Democrat, Grosvenor or Grant—for the latter before his death held like view with the former—the advice is well given and the point well taken. But when once the renaissance begins, I think the Augean stable of latter-day politics, even in the New South, will need another Hercules to purify it. Take, for instance, this statement from a recent issue of a great Southern newspaper: “The four candidates for railroad commissioner expended a total of \$14,940.80 on their campaign expenses, Mr. —, who was nominated, leading with \$10,522.80. The twelve candidates

for the Supreme Court paid out \$7,133.34. Sixteen Congressional candidates expended \$15,965.88."

In the *Independent* of recent date a leading Democratic manufacturer of New Jersey, under manifestly strong grievance, recites his experiences as a delegate in the State Democratic Convention, in which a vigorous effort was made, as in other Democratic Conventions, to force the indorsement of an unclean aspirant to the highest office of the republic. The article I cite is an evident instance of pot and kettle, but it sets in bold relief the straits and methods to which the dominating wing of the party of Jefferson and Jackson has been reduced, certainly in some of the Northern if not of the Southern States. I quote the closing paragraph of the article as a faithful picture of recent political happenings:

What are the means used by the bosses? First, corrupted judges at the primaries and bulldozing tactics there. Secondly, a brow-beating county and delegation chairman, with his attendant thugs. Thirdly, a properly managed credentials committee, with arrangements made beforehand, so that there will be con-

tests and the contests decided their way. Fourthly, a tactful chairman, who will have fine presence, be a hypocrite and pretend to fairness, but never recognize any but machine men. Fifthly, the presence of the boss, with his ever-ready check book and a fine knowledge of men to know what he must do to win his way with them.

In so far as this is a true picture of the dominant spirit and method of no small part of the Northern Democracy, and I firmly believe it so to be, I think it time for the South to first purge itself of the contamination that has come from thirty years of subserviency and emasculation, and then to assert and maintain the integrity and high principles of the Democracy of the fathers. If ever thieves and money changers were scourged from the ancient temple, it is high time that the lash of public scorn shall be laid upon the backs of all men, North or South, who have helped to disrupt and dishonor a once noble and victorious national party. When I remember, as a Confederate soldier, that William McKinley—peace to his dust—in the city of Atlanta, as Republican President, pleaded for equal recognition of Confederate with Federal dead; and that

one who has been honored by the Democratic party as standard bearer and occupant of a great office declined to vote for an ex-Confederate candidate in fear of the disfavor of his Western constituency ; and when within recent months, in great cities of the South, I have personally seen the cunning handiwork of paid henchmen of a millionaire saffron newsmonger seeking most insistently and offensively to buy exalted position for their master, I am ready once more to secede, except that the second act of secession would be the sundering of all bonds that bind my party to corrupting methods and leadership, and the setting up again in the New South of the lofty political ideals and independency of the Democracy of the Old South.

THUS far I have tried to portray, in frankly admitted partiality, the social, intellectual, and political characteristics of the Old South. But I should be seriously derelict in my portraiture if I left unnoted that which was more to it than wealth or culture or learning or party. If the



Old South had one characteristic more than another, I think it was the reverent and religious life and atmosphere which diffused themselves among all classes of its people, whether cracker white or plantation prince or dusky slave. If I were asked to explain this atmosphere of religion, I should hardly know where to begin. Perhaps its largely rural population and its peaceful agricultural pursuits predisposed to religion the simple-minded people who made up the Old South. More than this, however, must have been due to the religious strain in the blood of the Cavalier, Huguenot, and God-fearing Scotch-Irish ancestry from which they sprang. Most of all, I think that the high examples of a godly profession and practice in the leaders of the Old South made it easy for each succeeding generation to learn the first and noblest of all lessons—reverence for God, his Word, and His Church. And until this day the reverence of the Old South is constant in the New South. While New England, once the citadel of an orthodox Bible and Church and Sabbath, is now the prey of isms and innovations innumerable, and while the great West is marked by the painful contrast

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between its big secular enterprises and its diminutive churches and congregations, the South has continued largely to be not only the acknowledged home of the only pure Americanism, but the center also of conservatism and reverence in the worship of God and the maintenance of Christian institutions.

In no section of our country has the Christian Sabbath been so highly honored, Canada alone, with her reverently ordered day of rest, exceeding us in Sabbath observance. Here and there, however, is needed the cautionary signal of danger against the greed of railroad and other law-defying corporations, and the loose morality of aliens who come to us with money but without religious raising or conviction. In no other section is there such widely diffused catholicity of spirit and tolerance of differences among opposing religious beliefs. If the Roman Catholic has been freer from assault upon his religion in any country or time than in the South, I have failed to find it. If the Jew has as kindly treatment elsewhere under the sun, I should be glad to know it. And if there is as fine a courtesy and fraternity anywhere as among our Southern

Protestant bodies, I have yet to discover it. A few months ago, though of another denomination, I was called to their platform by the great Southern Baptist Assembly. A month before that I was summoned by the Cumberland Presbyterian Seminary, of Lebanon, to instruct its young men. A month before that I was writing articles for the chief religious organ of the Southern Presbyterians. I have lived long enough and am familiar enough with other parts of the world to know that such practical catholicity chiefly obtains in the South.

Nowhere as in the South do men so generally honor the house of God by their attendance and support. I make bold to say that upon any Sabbath day by count more men may be found in churches in Richmond and Atlanta than in Chicago and New York, though the combined population of the latter cities is ten times that of the former. These same churchgoing men of the South, following in the footsteps of their God-fearing fathers, are the members and supporters of Southern Churches, and are quick to resent innovation or disturbance of the old order. No man is so reverent and courteous toward men

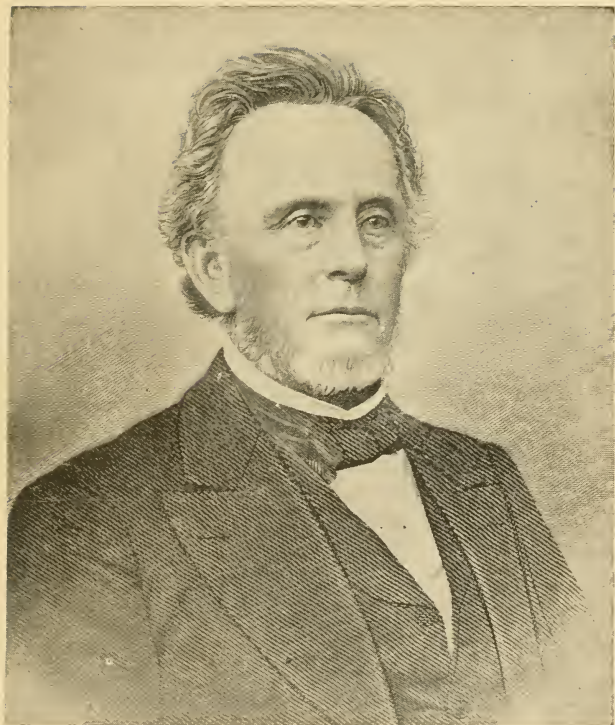
of the cloth as the men of the South, and wherever a minister of the gospel walks down the street of a Southern city or village, if worthy to wear the cloth of his sacred calling, he is the foremost man of his community in standing and influence.

Why this relative respect to the minister and the Church, and this clinging to religious forms and traditions, those of us who came up out of the Old South understand. Any reverent spirit of the New South in matters of religion is another of the heritages from the Old South. Then as now, even more than now, with our leaders and great men it was religion first, politics second, and money, or whatever money stood for, last and least. From my earliest recollection and reading, the governors, senators, congressmen, judges, great lawyers, physicians, merchants, and planters were commonly Christian men, both by profession and practice; and the man who was hostile or even indifferent to the Church and religion, however distinguished and brilliant he might be, was under ban of public opinion. As a commentary upon this significant religious affiliation of Southern leadership I

carefully noted a few years ago, in two contrasting lists taken at random of governors and congressmen, that while one list had five men out of twenty-five who were members of Christian Churches, the Southern list of twenty-five contained eighteen. While I share in the widespread regret that our Southern young men are not as reverent as were those of a generation ago, and are often conspicuous by absence upon Sabbath worship, yet in view of such facts as I am recounting I am more hopeful of the solution of the vexed problem of Christian young manhood in the South than in any other part of the land.

I HAVE paid tribute to the great political orators of the Old South. Let me pay higher tribute to its great preachers and pulpit orators, to whom, under God, more than to any other class or leadership, is due what the South has ever cherished as its best. There were giants in those days. If Yancey or Stephens could cast a spell upon a great political gathering, and play upon its

emotions as the harper plays upon the harp, George F. Pierce in his prime could stir men's hearts in a way that put to shame even the eloquence of the political rostrum. The last time I heard this greatest of all the orators of the Old South was not far from the time of his death. Marvin, fittingly called the "St. John of Methodism," sat in the pulpit behind him. To most of his audience Pierce and his preaching were known only by hearsay, and their firm belief was that Marvin was the real prince of the pulpit. I remember how Pierce battled against his bodily weakness and weariness, and how there came to his eye that wondrous flash as his old-time eloquence lifted him into heights and visions celestial. He was preaching of the pure faith once delivered unto the saints, and pleading for the old order of simple gospel truth and living. He had something to say of the new order of ministers who were substituting doubts and denials for the long-cherished doctrines of the Church. His opening sentence was: "A single meteor flashing athwart the heavens will arrest a larger measure of attention than the serene shining of a thousand planets." I think I know who the old



BISHOP GEORGE F. PIERCE.





man eloquent meant. A little while before, a dapper preacher, consumed by itch for popularity, had been dispensing a perfumed and smokeless theology that drew great crowds and tickled the ears of the groundlings. The theology of the Old South was too crude and barbarous and unscientific for such as he. Genesis was an allegory, creation an evolution, man was pre-Adamic, the deluge was only a local shower, the Pentateuch was polychromatic, Moses was largely mythical, there were two Isaiahs, all the ante-exilian history and writings were concocted by pious post-exilian experts, the incarnation and resurrection were touching legends but "quite unscientific," hell was "hades," and hades was a tolerably comfortable winter resort, and Bible inspiration, as a matter of fact, seldom inspired. Many times, in sight and sound of such dainty apostles of an emasculate Bible, have I longed for the ghosts of the stalwart preachers of my childhood—the Pierces, Thomas Sanford, Jefferson Hamilton, A. L. P. Green, P. P. Neely, Jesse Boring, McTyeire, Wightman, Summers, and the like—to rise up in their godly wrath and shake them over the flaming pit of a real old-

time, unabridged "hades" long enough to bring them to silence and repentance.

Down in the straw, at the mourners' bench of an Old South camp meeting, some of us got our theology and our religion. The Bible, in miracle and prophecy, was handled by reverent hands, and made most real to us as the infallible word of Almighty God. The law of Sinai, with unexpurgated cursings and blessings, was read to us amid the groanings of our troubled consciences. No ear so polite, no position so exalted, but a living and burning hell was denounced against its meannesses. As deep as the virus of sin in our souls sank the flashing, two-edged sword of the Spirit. The wound was made purposely deep and wide that the balm of Gilead might enter and heal the utmost roots of sin. By and by, when John the Baptists, like Boring and Lovick Pierce, had cut to the quick, and laid bare the wounded spirit, some gentler, wooing ministry, like that of Hamilton or Neely, came pointing the way to the cross. There was no lifting of the finger tip, daintily gloved and decorous, in token of a desire sometime or other to become a Christian. Cards, in colors, bear-

ing name and rates of the evangelist, agreeing to meet everybody in heaven, were not passed around for signatures. I never hear the old hymn of invitation, that lured many a hardened sinner of the Old South, as they sung it under the leafy arbor to flickering lights, after a weird, unearthly stirring of our hearts by the man in the pulpit, but I think of a great criminal lawyer, who for many years had led the bar of his State, and had made mock of God's Book and Church and ministers. He owned an old carriage driver who was one of God's saints in black, gray-haired and patient "Uncle Aleck," who had mourned and prayed over his unbelieving master. "Uncle Aleck," he said to him one day, "why do you believe in a book you can't read, and in a God you never saw? I have thousands of books in my library, yet I care nothing for religion." Uncle Aleck's only reply was to put his hand on his heart and say: "Marse John, I've been true and faithful to you all these years, ain't I, marster?" "Yes." "And I never lied to you or disobeyed you, has I, Marse John?" "No." "Then, marster, it's my religion that has made me what I am. I can't read, I can't see

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God, but I know the Lord Jesus Christ here in my heart."

Drawn by some spell he could not resist, the great lawyer came to the old camp ground and heard the awfully solemn message of the preacher with bowed head and heart full of trouble. When the hymn was sung,

"Come, humble sinner, in whose breast  
A thousand thoughts revolve;  
Come, with your guilt and fear oppressed,  
And make this last resolve,"

I shall never forget the startled look of preacher and people as straight to the mourners' bench sped the lawyer, crying in agony as he fell to the ground: "Send for Uncle Aleck!" And down in the straw white-haired old Aleck wrestled with God for Marse John, until a great shout went up from mourner and congregation as the master hugged the old darky and the darky hugged his master, saying: "I knew it was coming, Marse John." You will pardon a man whose head is growing gray if at times the heart grows hungry to turn back and see and hear the old sights and sounds of God's presence and

power as revealed especially at the ancient and now nearly extinct camp meeting.

ON a bright April day, 1861, books were closed in the old academy, there was the blare of bugle and roll of drum on the streets, people were hurrying together, and soon the roar of a cannon shook the building, as they told us of the bombardment of Sumter by the batteries of the young Confederacy. For months the very air had been vibrant with sound of drum and fife, of rattling musket and martial command. The Old South was soon a great camp of shifting, drilling soldiery. Every departing train bore to the front the raw and ungainly troops of the country, the trim city companies of State guards, and the gayly dressed cadets of the military schools. There were tender partings and long good-bys, so long to many of them that not yet has word of home greeting come. It seemed a great thing to be a soldier in those brave days when the girls decked the parting ones in flowers and sang to them "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Bonnie Blue

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Flag," and "Maryland, My Maryland." The scarlet and gold and gray, the flashing sword and burnished musket, the gay flowers and parting song, marked the beginning of that mighty death struggle of the Old South. Soon the gay song deepened into the hush before a great battle, or rose into the cry of the stricken heart over the long lists of wounded and slain. War grew grim and fierce and relentless. There were hunger and wounds, pale faces in hospital and sharp death of men at the front; and sleeplessness and heartache and holy privation and unfailing courage and comfort of Southern womanhood at home. Fiercer and hotter came the storm of battle, as the thin gray lines of Lee and Johnston confronted the soldiery and the resources of the world. Manassas, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Seven Pines, Chancellorsville, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Appomattox!—how these names, that wreathed with crape their thousands of hearts and homes, and marked the rise and fall of the battle tide, recall to us the passing of the Old South!

On another April day in 1865, as a boy in Mahone's Division, I looked my last into the face

of the Old South and its great commander, who came riding down the line of our stacked guns, and, halting his old gray war horse Traveler, tried to comfort our hearts by saying: "It's all over. Never mind, men; you have done your best. Go to your homes and be as brave and true as you have been with me."

In the great day of national assize, when empire, kingdom, and republic of earth shall be gathered to judgment, and the Muse of history shall unroll the record of their good and evil, the Old South, the "uncrowned queen" of the centuries, will be in their midst, her white vestment stained by the blood of her sons, her eyes dimmed by sorrow and suffering. No chaplet of laurel shall encircle her brow, and no noisy trump of fame shall hail her coming; but round her fair, proud head, as of yore, shall shine a halo of love, and Fame shall hang her head rebuked, and the trumpet fall from her nerveless hand, as the spirit of the Old South is passing by.

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The  
Old South

A Monograph



BY H. M. HAMILL, D.D.



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